



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)
Shinita Hemby
Faustino Menjivar
Jason W. Papanikolas

Work Session Minutes July 6, 2023 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell and Councilmember Shinita Hemby. Interim Town Manager Peter Jones and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen were the staff present. Representatives of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission attended to conduct a presentation on placemaking. Residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights were also present.

Approval of the Agenda

CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously.

1. Mayor

a. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reported on two closed sessions that had been held since the last Open Meeting. The first was on June 29, 2023, and was closed under Maryland Code Annotated, General Provisions Article, § 3-305(b)(1): To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. Present were Mayor Kulpa-Eddy, MPT Brittan-Powell, and CM Papanikolas who all voted to close the session at 5:32pm. CM Menjivar joined at 5:40pm. Also present (virtually) was the recruiter for the Town Manager search, David Deutsch. There was an added agenda item that occurred in open session, regarding a possible community service for a recently deceased Police Officer who had served in the BHPD. In the closed session, Council reviewed Town Manager applications and residents who had expressed interest in serving on the resident panel to interview the Town Manager candidates. Action taken included a consensus to invite 3 applicants to the interview process and to hold another closed session on July 6 to continue the discussion on the resident panel.

The second closed session was held on July 6, 2023, from 6:52pm to 6:58pm, also held under Maryland Code Annotated, General Provisions Article, § 3-305(b)(1). Council reached consensus and appointed the 5 residents who will serve on the resident panel to interview Town Manager candidates.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared a brief biography of Sgt. William Duck who passed away on June 28th after a long battle with cancer. She also shared the service details for Sgt. Duck.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that a long-time resident, Marilyn Hayden passed away on

July 2nd and she asked that we keep former councilmember Joan Hayden in our thoughts.

MPT Brittan-Powell asked if Sgt. Duck's services were open to the public.

CM Hemby asked that residents who have any concerns regarding applying for the Town's Flood Mitigation Grants to please reach out to her personally.

b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the July Town Calendar and highlighted the Four Cities Meeting and adding the Town Manager interviews on the 21st with staff and residents and on the 22nd with Council. At the request of MPT Brittan-Powell, Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the anticipated timeline for the Town Manager search and its conclusion.

c. M-NCPPC Placemaking Presentation

Adam Dodgshon, Garrett Dickerson, Connor Klein, and Tony Felts from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Placemaking Department gave a brief presentation on "Placemaking 101". They highlighted that this is a very brief overview of a relatively new section of M-NCPPC. Placemaking is defined as a process of engaging with communities to understand issues, often using temporary or demonstration activities to address needs and show what is possible. Mr. Dodgshon emphasized that placemaking must be inclusive and provide a vision for a single space that is both transformative and flexible. He continued that the Placemaking Team at M-NCPPC is hoping to celebrate the diversity of the County and to improve opportunities for people to participate in their communities, as well as promote sound planning practices and provide assistance to communities in placemaking. He reviewed the three pilot projects that the team has planned, noting that two are upcoming, one in Riverdale and the other in Largo. Mr. Dickerson then reviewed visual examples of placemaking events that have been done in the County and elsewhere. He highlighted that placemaking pays great attention to detail and branding. Mr. Klein reviewed the Planning Assistance for Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program, noting that these are consultant-led projects to further elements of *Plan Prince George's 2035*, which includes Healthy Communities, Housing and Neighborhoods, Transportation and Mobility, Community Heritage, Culture and Design, Economic Prosperity, Natural Environment, Land Use and Public Facilities. He noted that the Town already has a PAMC project based on the Walkable Bikeable Berwyn Heights report and that he will return on July 17th to address that in more detail. Council asked questions and discussed the upcoming placemaking events in the County. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about the relationships with contractors and how our current project with PAMC would affect working with them going forward. Mr. Dodgshon explained that the Placemaking program is not currently active, but rather a test program. He explained that they are working with a nonprofit out of Dallas called "Better Block" and will be doing a report once the three pilot projects are completed to determine how things move forward. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about how stormwater management could work alongside placemaking. Mr. Dodgshon explained that well-designed stormwater management can also be a place of passive enjoyment. Further, Mr. Felts added that the Planning Commission could be able to help with technical assistance, but that he could not make any commitments, especially until there is a better understanding of what was desired. CM Hemby asked for clarification on if the Town would be able to seek technical assistance while the Walkable Bikeable project is in process. Mr. Felts clarified the difference between a PAMC project (similar to a grant) and technical assistance. She also asked about how locations would be determined. Mr. Felts stated that it is up to the

Town to decide. In discussions about where projects might be located, it was concluded that a plat map will be sent to the Town to help determine property ownership. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy encouraged residents to participate in the Community Advisory Team to provide input on projects like this one. Mr. Felts added that so much of community partnerships is about managing expectations, as you cannot please all the people all the time. He added to make sure that people who may not have the time to sit on an advisory board also be included in discussions. Finally, the M-NCPPC team concluded that they will work to connect the Town with resources.

d. Green Team discussion on Pollinator Garden

Geneviève de Messieres and Michael Ellis from the Green Team joined the Council to discuss the need for a pollinator garden as part of the Bee City requirements. Mr. Ellis shared his experience as a horticulturist on conservation landscaping and stormwater gardens as well as adding pollinator space to the Town. He expressed a desire to reinvigorate the garden at Berwyn Heights Elementary School; since the pandemic it has fallen somewhat into disrepair. He would also like to see pollinators incorporated in rain gardens within the Town. Ms. de Messieres added that there needs to be both public and private pollinator gardens. Mr. Ellis expressed a desire to have the garden at the school rejuvenated by the first day of school. He would also like pollinators to be considered in all of the planning projects within the Town. MPT Brittan-Powell expressed that there are sometimes concerns about bee stings with pollinator gardens. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked if the Green Team would be able to maintain gardens in the community. Ms. de Messieres expressed concern about the bandwidth of the Green Team. She also stated that for the Green Team to plan other areas for gardens, they would need to know what land was on the table. Mr. Michael Bloom stated that there is potential for a tree lawn on the south side of the new Aldi parking lot, with 12 feet of land and would like to see shorter trees there.

e. Small Cell Facilities Update

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that the Council needs to decide if we will rely solely on the County's approval for small cell facilities installed in Town or if we would like to hire their consultants ("CTC") to do an independent review of applications with potential added requirements specific to Berwyn Heights. She added that the costs of the CTC review would be added to the cost of the application. There was discussion regarding if reviewing these applications would be within Code Compliance capacity. After discussion, the Council decided to vote on a resolution to hire CTC for consulting at the next Town Meeting.

f. County Hazard Mitigation Grants Notice of Interest

ITM Jones reviewed that the Prince George's County Office of Homeland Security held a webinar on the opportunity for Hazard Mitigation Grants. He stated that there are two areas of funding, one is called Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and the other is Flood Mitigation Assistance. However, the Town is unlikely to be qualified to receive Flood Mitigation Assistance. One requirement of receiving BRIC funding would be that the Town needs to provide 25% matching funds, but they cannot be federal (ARPA) funds. BRIC funding could include pre-construction projects, possibly management costs, and large mitigation projects. There was concern about providing the 25% match and where those funds would come from. ITM Jones explained that the first step is to provide a Notice of Interest (NOI) to the County, which should be done by July 12, 2023. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked for confirmation that if the Town sends a NOI to the County, that we can withdraw if we cannot find the matching

funds. ITM Jones will send the NOI to the County and the Council will vote on a resolution to confirm the Council's intent.

g. Update: IT Vendor

ITM Jones reviewed the contract with our current vendor has been extended for 90 days. He is preparing a "Request for Qualifications" for a new vendor. Council asked to be able to give input on the RFQ. It will be drafted for Council review by July 17, 2023.

h. ARPA Budget discussion

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked ITM Jones to review the introduced ARPA budget that he has been working on. MPT Brittan-Powell had also created a budget document and there was discussion on which document to review. Council worked through the line items on the document introduced at the June Town Meeting and updated by ITM Jones. MPT Brittan-Powell declined to comment on the budget until the draft he provided was up for review later in the meeting. As Council reviewed the introduced document, CM Hemby requested that \$10,000 be added for upgrades for Code Compliance hardware and software needs. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked about the request from the Volunteer Fire Department for a utility vehicle. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he did not believe there was consensus on that item. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested \$40,000 be included for the VFD. There was also discussion to add the Community Partnership pilot project with the Cornerstone Grand Council for \$5,000. MPT Brittan-Powell reviewed the agreed upon guidelines and explained that he had divided his budget into two categories: Stormwater/Green Infrastructure and Community Building. He reviewed his document in detail. Council discussed proposed job positions for stormwater management. There was also considerable discussion on how much the stormwater mitigation efforts would be relegated to Code Compliance, how to fund the specialized training and if additional personnel would be needed. They determined that this would need input from Code Compliance Director Goodwin. There was discussion on the possibility of adding solar projects as well as how backflow preventers are incorporated into the budget. MPT Brittan-Powell had proposed several new projects under the heading of "Town-wide and Localized Interventions". He reviewed park and community development projects, including placemaking and implementing the "Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvement Action Plan". After discussion on the subtitle "Centers and Programs", CM Hemby asked if the budget was going to be discussed line item by line item without CM Menjivar and CM Papanikolas present. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested passing a truncated version of the introduced FY24+ ARPA budget at the next Town Meeting to address the agreed-upon, pre-existing line items and to continue working through more detailed projects with the entire Council. As the Council comes to consensus on these, they can be passed as Ordinance 189 budget amendments.

i. Resident Comments

Geneviève de Messieres of 58th Ave shared that MPT Brittan-Powell had reached out to her to ask the Green Team for items for the ARPA budget. After discussion, they would like to advise the Council to preserve and protect the tree canopy. Trees, as well as gardens, such as the pollinator garden and stormwater relief should be top priorities. There was also concern about the heat island in the new Aldi parking lot and they would encourage bilingual educational signage for demonstration projects. She added that personally, she believes the stormwater mitigation grants should be funded at a higher level. She expressed concerns over the limited value in rain barrels and cisterns. She also does not believe that solar should be prioritized over trees, as trees add generational value.

2. Public Safety

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that National Night Out will be August 1st. CM Hemby added that she hopes this year's activity options will be closer to pre-Covid levels.

3. Public Works

There was no Public Works Report.

4. Administration

MPT Brittan-Powell shared that during the heavy rains earlier in the day, ITM Jones and he visited areas of Town that had experienced flooding in the past. He reported a great deal of confusion about the different grant programs and a lot of false information out there about the programs. He reported no need to address the agenda items he requested (listed below as a.-f.) as they were covered during the budget discussion.

- a. Status Update of SWM Prevention and Preparedness for Areas of Past Victims**
- b. Status Update on SWM Grant and Floodgates**
- c. Update of SWM Townwide Mitigation Efforts**
- d. Update of Makerspace Possibilities**
- e. Update on Community Building Efforts**
- f. Encouraging Citizens Participation in Town Affairs**

5. Code Compliance

CM Hemby reminded residents if you'd like to build anything, to please call Code Compliance to determine if you need a permit.

6. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs

There was no PRECA report.

7. Adjournment

CM Hemby moved to adjourn. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:18pm.